



**CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 11/2020)**

Project Information

Project Name: Middle Fork Smith River Curve Improvement

DIST-CO-RTE: 01-DN-199

PM/PM: 24.110/24.267

EA: 01-0K640

Federal-Aid Project Number: 0120000129

Project Description

The project would construct a curve improvement and repave the roadway near the Middle Fork Smith River Bridge (#01-0015) on US Highway 199 at post mile 24.0/24.3 in Del Norte County. The project is needed to address a collision concentration at the north end of the bridge. The highway cross section would include two 12-foot lanes, a standard 8-foot southbound shoulder and a 4-foot northbound shoulder. An existing approximately 260-ft compound curve directly north of the bridge would be realigned to a uniform 300-foot radius curve by widening the northbound portion of the highway with a cut slope. Some small diameter trees would be removed, and erosion control would be placed. The highway superelevation would be improved to 8% and the roadway structural section would be reconstructed from the new 300-foot curve north approximately 250 feet. Existing pavement would be cold planed and overlaid with 0.15' HMA (Type A), the existing 15-foot wide pullout on the right would be retained, centerline rumble strip would be replaced, signs updated, and pavement delineation replaced. All work is within the existing Caltrans easement with the US Forest Service. Biological, air quality, noise, water quality, hazardous waste, visual, and cultural reviews have been completed for the project.

Caltrans CEQA Determination (Check one)

- Not Applicable** – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency
- Not Applicable** – Caltrans has prepared an IS or EIR under CEQA

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the project is:

- Exempt by Statute.** (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)
- Categorically Exempt. Class 1 (c).** (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)
 - No exceptions apply that would bar the use of a categorical exemption (PRC 21084 and 14 CCR 15300.2). See the [SER Chapter 34](#) for exceptions.
- Covered by the Common Sense Exemption.** This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR 15061[b][3].)

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Jason Meyer

01/19/2023

Print Name

Signature

Date

Project Manager

Grant Wilcox

01/19/2023

Print Name

Signature

Date



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Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

Not Applicable

Caltrans has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). See SER Chapter 30 for unusual circumstances. As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA and is included under the following:

23 USC 326: Caltrans has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to 23 USC 326 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 18, 2019, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

- 23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(22)
23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)(Enter activity number)
Activity Enter activity number listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and Caltrans

23 USC 327: Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under 23 USC 327. The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated December 23, 2016 and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Jason Meyer (Print Name), [Signature] (Signature), 01/19/2023 (Date)

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Grant Wilcox (Print Name), [Signature] (Signature), 01/19/2023 (Date)

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion: 11/7/2022
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 1/17/2023

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet if needed (i.e., not necessary if included on an attached ECR). Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., additional studies and design conditions).



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Continuation sheet:

- To protect nesting or roosting northern spotted owl (NSO) and marbled murrelet (MAMU), no construction activities generating sound levels 20 or more decibels (dB) above ambient sound or with maximum sound levels (ambient sound level plus activity-generated sound level) above 90 dB would occur between February 1 and August 5. Between August 6 and September 15, work that generates sound levels equal to or greater than 10 dB above ambient sound levels or above 90 dB max would observe a daily work window beginning 2 hours post-sunrise and ending 2 hours pre-sunset. Sound-related work windows would be lifted between September 16 and January 31.
- Vegetation removal would be restricted to the period outside the bird breeding season (September 16 through January 31) or, if vegetation removal is required during the breeding season, a nesting bird survey would be conducted by a qualified biologist within one week of removal.
- Pre-construction surveys for active raptor nests within one-quarter mile of construction area would be conducted and appropriate conservation measures implemented if active nests are identified.
- No trash or foodstuffs would be left or stored on-site to prevent attracting corvids.
- Artificial night lighting would be temporary and directed specifically on the portion of the work area actively under construction.
- Invasive non-native species control would be implemented.
- A stormwater plan would be prepared and standard water Quality BMPs would be implemented.
- Temporary high visibility fencing (THVF) would be installed around environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) prior to beginning construction work to ensure areas are avoided and protected.
- Potential root impacts were analyzed and documented in a Tree Impacts Memo. BMPs would be utilized for minimizing disturbance to trees near excavation.
- Standard special provisions would address hazardous waste issues related to any aerially deposited lead, grinding and removal of thermoplastic stripe, and traffic stripe and pavement markings containing lead removal.

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Final Audit Report

2023-01-20

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